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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes responses to a survey that examined the attitudes of secondary school officials in Vancouver, British Columbia, toward dividing the secondary school year into two separate semesters. Survey data were gathered from questionnaires completed by all secondary school principals in Vancouver, as well as from written comments submitted by six school board coordinators and three assistant superintendents. At the time of the survey, 12 of Vancouver's 18 secondary schools used semestering in at least some courses. The five main concerns expressed by survey respondents were (1) that semestering provide sufficient flexibility for students' course selections, (2) that there be continuity of instruction within a semester, (3) that courses be modified to fit into a five-month semester, (4) that there be continuity of instruction between semesters, and (5) that attention be paid to the increased pressure of semestering on administrators, counselors, and teachers. A sample copy of the survey questionnaire is included in the appendix. (Author/JG)

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THE SEMESTER SYSTEM IN VANCOUVER SCHOOLS AND ITS EFFECTS ON CURRICULUM

Research Report 75-01

January, 1975

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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire on semestering was sent in November, 1974 to all secondary school principals in Vancouver. At the same time Vancouver School Board Coordinators and Assistant Superintendents were invited to give their comments. All the principals returned their completed questionnaires; and six Coordinators and three Assistant Superintendents submitted written responses. There were five main areas of concern:

1) That semestering provide sufficient flexibility for students' course selections.

2) That there be continuity of instruction within a semester.

3) That courses be modified to fit into a five-month semester.

4) That there be continuity of instruction between semesters.

5) That attention be paid to the increased pressure of semestering on administrators, counsellors and teachers.

Discussion of these concerns resulted in the following recommendations:

1) That the semester plan be continued because it is one way of facilitating the provision of alternatives in the school system (e.g., mini-courses, locally-developed courses, early graduation, etc.) and makes possible a broader range of course offerings.

2) That curriculum development and course modification be encouraged so as to provide courses which are tailored for the semester system. (It is important that adequate time be provided for core courses and for English in particular.)

3) That a committee give careful consideration to the content of selected courses and to the merits of semestering them, with a view to suggesting ones that might best be offered as double-semester courses (e.g., En.12, En.8, En.9, Ma.8, Ma.9, Hi.12, etc.).

4) That there be a commitment to continue to monitor the semester systems being implemented in Vancouver schools and to re-examine systematically their impact on student achievement at the Grade 10 and Grade 12 levels.

THE SEMESTER SYSTEM IN VANCOUVER SCHOOLS AND ITS EFFECTS ON CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

Semestering is a system of school organization and instruction in which the ten-month school year is divided into two equal parts. Each five-month period has registration, course selection and graduation associated with it. For example, if a student were taking eight courses in a ten-month period with each course lasting ten months, then, in the semestered system, he could take four courses per semester, each course lasting five months.

In 1970-71 Mr. Allan Moodie of Evaluation and Research conducted a survey of the semester system operating in six secondary schools. (Research Report 71-19). Since that time there have been significant changes in semestering and greater interest expressed about its effects on curriculum and instruction. Accordingly on November 12, 1974 a questionnaire on semestering (See Appendix A) was mailed to principals in all Vancouver Secondary Schools. There was a 100% return. The extent to which each of the schools is presently committed to semestering is indicated below.

1) Most courses semestered (courses in parentheses are <u>not</u> semestered):

   i) Britannia (Ma.12; I.E.8; Gu.8-11; En.8-10)

   ii) Kitsilano (some En.8,9,12; Gu.8-11; some Ma.8,9; Ma.12; P.H.E.8-11; some Sc.8,9; some S.S.8)

   iii) Magee (Gu.8,9; I.E.8; Ma.8,12; Fr.8,9; Choir 11,12; P.H.E.8,9)

   iv) Prince of Wales (En.8,9; Gu.8-11; music; some Ma.12; Fr.8,10; P.H.E.8; S.S.9; some S.S.8)

   v) Templeton (Art 8; C.D.11,12; D.P.11,12; O.P.11,12; S.P.12; En.8,9; I.E.8; Ma.10,12; music; Bi.12; Ch.12; Ph.12)

   vi) Thompson (O.P.12; H.E.8; En.8; Lit.12; Gu.8; I.E.8; Ma.12; music)

   Vii) Hamber (Gu.8; I.E.8; P.H.E.8,9; Bi.12; Ch.12; Ph.12; occupational courses)

2) Most courses not semestered (courses in parentheses are semestered):

i) Gladstone (Art 8; Mu.8)

ii) Point Grey (Art 9-11; Ty.10; Sh.11; F.N.9; Fd.11; Cr.12; En.10-12; Ww.9; Mw.9; G.A.9; El.9; Fr.8,9; Sp.9; Sc.8-10; S.S.9-11; Dr.9,10)

iii) Tupper (Art 8-10; Rk.9; C.C.9; Fr.8; Mu.8,9; Sc.8,10; S.S.9; Dr.9)

iv) Killarney (a few Grade 8 courses are semestered)

v) Byng (modified Sc.9,10 and Ma.9 on a semester system)

3) Not semestered:

i) Churchill

ii) King George

iii) John Oliver (At the Grade 8 level I.E. is split into three and H.E.8 is split twice.)

iv) Windermere

v) Technical

vi) University Hill (operates on a quarterly system of 9 weeks per quarter)

At the same time Coordinators and Assistant Superintendents were invited to give their comments. (Respondents are listed in Appendix B.)

The responses from these three groups, Principals, Assistant Superintendents and Coordinators, form the basis of this report.

1) Summary of Principals' Comments:

- Generally the teachers are under more pressure in a semester system. They see fewer classes per semester, but over the year see more students than they would in a non-semestered program. (See Appendix A, question # 11)

- Counsellors and administrators have a greater work load. (See Appendix A, questions #12, 13)

- Many courses must be modified to fit the semester system. The Grade 12 academic courses (especially Math 12) are difficult to complete in one semester, (See Appendix A, questions #6,7)

- The student has a greater number of electives to choose from, (Appendix A, question #8)

- Skill subjects are more effectively taught in a semestered system because of the daily practice. Subjects requiring reflection and extensive reading (Lit.12, History 12) are more effectively taught in the ten-month system. (Appendix A, question # 17)

- Semestering has been accompanied by an increased demand for many of the elective courses, (I.E., H.E., Art, etc.) (Question #23) It does not appear to have decreased the demand for any courses except the double-semestered courses in two schools. (See Appendix A, question #24)

- The semester system is better suited to the "extended day" arrangement. (Appendix A,question #25)

Generally the principals find the semester system providing greater flexibility in terms of time of graduation, course selection and spare utilization. They point out that the semester system has more pressure associated with it and a feeling that the courses are being rushed. Furthermore, semestering requires modification of all courses. (Appendix A, questions #27, 28)

2. Summary of Assistant Superintendents' Comments-

The Assistant Superintendents mentioned the same advantages for semestering; two opportunities for graduation each year, wider course selection and generally more flexibility. Their common concern appeared to be with the effect semestering has on the courses in the curriculum;

> " Are the regular courses prescribed by the Department of Education being 'watered down' to fit into the five month period?"
>
> " . . . there has been (in most instances) very little done with the curriculum and students are given the 'bare bones' course."
>
> " Creates difficulties in covering the work of each course unless extensive adjustment is made."

Other concerns relate to:

- equalizing the granting of credits when the hours for a given course vary widely.
- problems of transferring a student from a semestered to a non-semestered school; or vice versa.
- field trips and extra-curricular events are sacrificed because of time pressures.
- certain courses require continuity if proficiency is to be maintained (e.g. Band, Choir, etc.)

3. Summary of Coordinators' Comments -

A) Physical Education and Athletics:

Advantages of Semestering;

- Demonstrates the advantages of regular daily physical exercise and activity.
- Gives an opportunity to develop units of instruction with improved continuity.
- The instructor has closer contact and greater knowledge of his students.

Disadvantages of Semestering:

- P.E. may be taken for only half the vear, and a whole year could elapse before the student elects to take P.E. again (e.g. from Semester 1 1974-5 to Semester 2, 1975-6).
- May lead to an imbalance of seasonal activities.
- Careful scheduling is required to take advantage of specialist skills within the department.
- Swimming, Community Recreation 12 and outdoor education may not be duplicated each semester.

General Comment; "The basic concern is that physical education should not be semestered."

B) Library Services:

Advantages of Semestering: none mentioned

Disadvantages of Semestering:

-The use of the library by students during non-instructional blocks, as a lounge or as a study hall for textbook assignments, puts an unnecessary burden on the facilities and sometimes causes supervisory problems.
-Some teachers haveindicated they make fewer library assignments due to the increased time pressure.

C) Counselling Services:

Advantages of Semestering;

- provides opportunity for earlier graduation.
- allows a student who is short 3 or 4 courses for graduation to graduate in 5 months.
- when a student has failed in one school, a semestered school offers him a fresh start within the same school year.

Disadvantages of semestering:

- it is difficult to place a student from a semestered school into a non-semestered school.

D) Pre-employment Programs:

Advantages of Semestering:

- It is sometimes easier to place a student in a semestered school. Generally the school has some space available in the second semester. However, in some cases, the semestered schools are finding additional pressure during this second semester from students in the non-semestered schools. Students who have done a poor job in the first part of the year may wish to enter a semestered school to pick up failed subjects.
- Greater flexibility of courses makes it easier to arrange a special timetable.

Disadvantages of Semestering:

- Many of the students in the pre-employment program are weak in school work, and have great difficulty with the pressure, frequency of classes and shortened work time for a particular subject.
- Students are unwilling to leave the class to go on work experience because of time pressures.

E) Music:

Advantages of Semestering: none mentioned.

Disadvantages of Semestering:

- Lack of continuity. For a student who elects music first semester 1974-75 and then second semester 1975-76, a year will have elapsed with loss of skills.
- Choosing music means that a student may be required to take other courses that he may not be keen about, or it may restrict his choice of electives. This does not encourage enrollment in the music program.
- A successful music program requires a large group of students working together over an extended period of time. This is almost impossible in the semester system.

General Comments:

"Semestering, in the opinion of many music teachers, is frustrating, even ruining our music programs."

". . . .music, is fighting for survival on the semestered timetable."

E) Music (continued):

Solutions being attempted:

1) Back-to-back alternate timetabling with another subject.
2) Early morning extended day for performing group.

F) Industrial Education:

Advantages of Semestering:

- More flexibility in course selection.
- The normal rate at which a student learns is usually faster because the periods tend to be closer together.
- Projects that develop quickly hold more student-interest as a general rule (this condition usually exists in a semester).
- Changes of program can be arranged in mid-year.
- The tendency is for students to work harder because deadlines are close at hand and not next summer sometime.
- In terms of successful course completion, there is a marked tendency to give teachers one preparation period per day, which if used properly, is a tremendous asset.
- Students have a chance to repeat a failed course in 5 months rather than the usual 10 months.

Disadvantages of Semestering:

- Tends to be more expensive because more materials are used.
- Teachers have to order supplies for two classes instead of for the year while not being absolutely sure what the second semester will bring in terms of numbers.
- There is a tendency for students to take the more demanding courses in September. The reasoning is that if a student fails, he can take the course again in the next semester. However, that has the effect of having Fall programs light and the Spring elective programs very heavy and that condition can have further problems in terms of staffing.

F) Industrial Education (continued):

- Semestering tends to be more hectic for teachers, as two complete sets of marks and lessons must be prepared within a one-year time span.
- In skill development there can be a seven-month span between courses which can lead to a sharp drop off in skills. However, the time necessary to regain the skill level is usually quite short. This disadvantage balanced against having no opportunity to take the skill at all is a minor one.
- Students who miss work miss a lot of it quickly. If someone is ill he will pay a severe penalty in terms of necessary catch up time.

Other Comments;

The present semester is being fitted into the traditional school year. Many of the advantages that could be gained from semestering are thereby lost. A suggested alternate school year is: begin in July, have a one month Xmas break in December; classes from January to end of May; have a one month break in June.

DISCUSSION

Four major areas of comment can be identified from the responses of the Principals, Coordinators and Assistant Superintendents. They are:

1) Flexibility of the semester system
2) Modification of curriculum
3) Continuity of instruction within a semester and between semesters.
4) Increased pressure on students, teachers, counsellors and administrators.

1) Flexibility of the Semester System:

The semester system appears to offer the student greater flexibility in his secondary school program. There are more courses for him to choose from, and he is able to take more of these courses over two five-month semesters than he could in a ten-month full-year system. This means that he may be able to graduate in January instead of June; or retard his graduation until the following January or June. (See Appendix A, questions 9a and 9b.) (More students elect to graduate earlier than later than normal.) All of these factors have advantages for a student who:

a) Wishes to pick up extra Grade 12 courses
b) Enter a semestered university
c) Enter employment earlier in the year.

If the student fails a course, he can repeat it in 5 months instead of the usual 10 months on the full-year program. This, coupled with the fact that he can take more courses in his program, means that a failure is much less likely to impede his progress. It also allows a student who has problems to arrange a special timetable. This increased flexibility does make it difficult to offer all the alternatives in some subject areas in both semesters. The Coordinator of Physical Education mentioned seasonal sports; swimming; community recreation, and outdoor education as possible problems in this regard.

2) Modification of Curriculum:

This was an area of concern with the Assistant Superintendents (see page 4 Summary of Assistant Superintendents' comments). They suggested that new courses would have to be developed specifically for semestering. The principals who responded mentioned a large number of courses that have been modified to fit the five-month program (see Appendix A, question 7 of questionnaire). Most of these are the academic Grade 12 courses. They indicated that the changes include condensing the course, deleting extraneous material, breaking the course into smaller packages; or double semestering. Some schools stated that they had redesigned whole courses to fit into a semester. Most principals did not see course revision as a problem. Two principals indicated that they did not think there was any need to modify the courses extensively or cut down the time allotted to a subject (see Appendix A, question 28). Course modification was not mentioned as a problem by any of the Coordinators.

3) Continuity of Instruction:

a) Within a semester:

Most principals in semestered schools, thought that the students benefited from daily exposure to skill subjects such as I.E., H.E., Typing, etc. (See Appendix A, question 17.) The Coordinator for Physical Education and the Coordinator of Industrial Education both mentioned that the concentration of student time in P.E. and I.E. is an advantage. The disadvantage mentioned by two principals is the effect this daily exposure to a course is having on the subjects such as literature and history which require outside reading and reflective thinking. Three principals also mentioned the negative effect a student's extended absence could have on his progress when there is a concentration of course material in a short time.

b) Between semsters:

The present system could allow a student to skip two semesters between sequential courses. For example, he could take Mathematics 10 in the first semester of grade 10 and Math 11 in the second semester of grade 11. This long interval of time, and even the shorter gap of one semester, are major concerns in sequential language courses and music. (See Music Coordinators' comments, page 4 and Appendix A, question 18b.) The Industrial Education Coordinator mentioned this elapsed time as causing a drop-off in skills but he also mentioned that the time necessary to regain the skills is quite short.

4) Increased Pressure:

Comments of increased pressure in all persons affected by the semester system were vague, but frequently mentioned. The workload for administrators and counsellors is heavier because of the double start-up. The teachers see more students over the year which means more marking, more preparation, more classroom administration etc. Many principals believed that the courses are rushed (See Appendix A, question 16). The Coordinator of Pre-employment Programs stated that many of the students he deals with are generally weak in school work and have trouble handling the increased pressure, the greater frequency of classes and the shorter time devoted to a subject.

Addendum

The following are individual comments submitted in response to the draft report on semestering:

1) The loss of instructional time, under the semester system, is cumulative. During four years of high school, a student could lose as many as 200 hours of instruction in a subject.

2) In some schools few courses are rewritten to enable teachers to provide an adequate course in the time available; instead, sections of the course are omitted.

3) One of the requirements for high school graduation is the successful completion of twelve courses; however, a student could take as many as sixteen courses over two years (or twenty if he doesn't take any study periods). One principal has expressed the concern that students will not make a serious effort to pass "extra" courses taken beyond the minimum requirement of twelve. However, it was noted by another administrator that the majority of students successfully complete more courses than they require for graduation at his school.

4) If a student makes an unsatisfactory choice, he has to tolerate it for a shorter period of time in the semester system (i.e., five months instead of ten months).

5) Some teachers in the academic disciplines have indicated that there is more complete mastery through concentrated exposure. Others have commented that "concept" development is better accomplished over an extended period of time.

APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE RESPONSES OF THE PRINCIPALS.

Questionnaire: Semestering in Secondary Schools

NOTE; This questionnaire is directed especially to Principals of those schools operating on a semester system. However, responses are sought from all Secondary Principals.

1. How many hours of instruction is given in the typical course on the semester system in your school?

   - Six semestered or partially semestered schools reported 90 to 95 hours of instruction.
   - Four semestered or partially semestered schools reported 60 - 70 hours of instruction.
   - One school reported 90,120 and 180 hours of instruction.
   - Seven schools did not report.

2. How many blocks of instruction does the typical student on the semester plan take in each grade?

   For semestered schools only.

   - Grade 8 10 blocks (7 schools); 9 blocks (1 school)
     7 blocks (1 school)
     Grade 9 10 blocks (7 schools); 8 or 9 blocks (1 school);
     7 blocks (1 school)
     Grade 10 10 blocks (7 schools); 8 or 8 blocks (1 school);
     7 blocks (1 school)
     Grade 11 9 or 10 blocks (6 schools); 8 blocks (1 school);
     7 blocks (1 school)
     Grade 12 8,9 or 10 blocks (7 schools); 7 blocks (1 school)

3. How many locally developed courses are offered in your school this school year?
   The typical school had 2 or 3 locally developed courses.

   Responses:

no	locally developed courses	2 schools
2 or 3	" "	11 schools
6	" "	1 school
8	" "	2 schools
9	" "	1 school
no answer		1 school

4. How many "mini courses" are being offered, and what is the duration of the typical "Mini course"?

- The typical school had no mini courses (11 schools), One school reported two of 5 hours duration per week. One school reported three of 5 hours duration per week, One school reported one of 15 hours duration per week. Three responses were not clear.

5. a) If there is a "non-instructional" block, how does the student use that time?

The typical responses were: Independent study, library work, obtain extra help, extra labs or assignments.

b) What does the teacher do in a "non-instructional" block?

The typical responses were: working and preparation for lessons. Four schools indicated the teachers use this time to give extra help to students; and four schools indicated that the teachers do supervisory work (occasionally) during the "non-instructional" block.

6. For which courses (if any) is there too much content to cover adequately in one semester?

*Typically, the Grade 12 academic courses had too much content.

COURSE	NO. OF SCHOOLS REPORTING TOO MUCH CONTENT.
Math 12	5
Chem.12	4
Phy.12	4
Bio. 12	3
Lit. 12	3
Office Practice 12	3
Eng. 8 & 10	2
Sec. Practice 12	2
Math 11	1
Math 10	1
Eng. 8	1

Band and Choir	1
S.S. 11	1
All courses	1
All examinable grade 12 courses	1

No response - 8 schools

7. a) How many courses have been modified or restructured to suit the semester system?

All or almost all - 6 schools
No answer - 12 schools.

b) List them, please.

" All or almost all" - 6 schools,
plus (from other schools)

Math 12	(2 schools)	Math 11	(1 school)
Chem. 12	(2 schools)	His. 11	(1 school)
Phy.12	(2 schools)	Geo. 11	(2 school)
Bio. 12	(2 schools)	Law 11	(1 school)
O.P. 12	(1 school)	Ec. 11	(1 school)
Lit. 12	(2 schools)	Eng. 11	(1 school)
Fr. 12	(2 schools)	Math 10	(4 schools)
His. 12	(2 schools)	Eng. 10	(2 schools)
Geo 12	(2 schools)	Sc. 10	(1 school)
Law 12	(1 school)	S.S. 10	(2 schools)
Ec. 12	(1 school)	Math 9	(3 schools)
Eng. 12	(1 school)	Eng. 9	(2 schools)
S.P. 12	(1 school)	S.S. 9	(1 school)
Senior I.E. courses-(1 school)		Math 8	(2 schools)
		H.E. 8	(1 school)
		I.E. 8	(1 school)
		S.S. 8	(1 school)

No Comment - 5 schools.

c) How have these courses been modified?

- By reducing content or deleting peripheral items or compacting. (5 schools)
- By dividing the course into smaller packages with each package taught separately. (2 schools)
- Redesigning the courses. (2 schools)
- Double semestering of examinable grade 12 subjects. (1 school)
- No answer (8 schools)

8. How does the number of elective courses that you offer on the semester plan compare with the number that you could offer if your school were on a full year time-table?

- Can offer more in the semester system (11 schools)
- Can offer fewer in the semester system (0 schools)
- No answer (7 schools)

9. a) During the 1973-74 school year, how many students completed the requirements for graduation in less than the normal time?

- No answer 12 schools.
- For the remaining 6 schools;
  Total no. of grade 12 students = 1680
- Students completing requirements for graduation in less than normal time = 202 (12% of grade 12 class)

b) During the 1973-74 school year, how many students were enabled by semestering to complete the requirements for graduating at a slower pace, (i.e. in 4½ or 5 years?)

No answer - 12 schools
For the remaining 6 schools;
Total no. of grade 12 students = 1680
Students completing the requirements for graduating in more than normal time = 62 students (4% of grade 12 class)

10. How do the workloads (blocks of class instruction) for students compare on the two different plans?

- Workload heavier in semester system 3 schools
- Workload lighter in the semester system 1 school
- Workload no different in semester system 4 schools
- No response 8 schools

11. How do the workloads (teaching blocks) for teachers compare on the two different plans?

- Workload heavier in the semester system 6 schools

- Workload lighter in the semester system 1 school
- Workload no different in the semester system 1 school
- no response 10 schools

12. How do the workloads for counsellors compare on the two different plans?

- Workload heavier in the semester system 12 schools
- Workload lighter in the semester system 0 schools
- Workload no different in the semester system 0 schools
- no response 6 schools

13. How do the workloads for administrators compare on the two different plans?

- Workload heavier in the semester system 11 schools
- Workload lighter in the semester system 0 schools
- Workload the same in the semester system 0 schools
- no response 7 schools

14. How many students who failed a course in the first semester last year, repeated the course in the second semester?

- 90% to 100% of the students who failed . . . (2 schools)
- most of the students who failed (no figures given) . . . (3 schools)
- no response (13 schools)

15. Of the number in #14 (above), how many "passed" the course in the second attempt?

- 80% to 90% passed in the second attempt . . . (4 schools)
- most of the students (no figures given) . . . (3 schools)
- no response . . . (11 schools)

16. How does the pace of instruction compare under the two plans?

- Faster, greater, more intense in the semester system . . . (8 schools)
- Slower, more relaxed in the semester system . . . (0 schools)
- The same under the two plans in the semester system . . . (1 school)
- No response . . . (9 schools)

17. Are there some courses that are taught more effectively on one plan or the other? (Please explain)

Taught more effectively on semester plan

SKILL subjects (I.E., H.E., typing, etc) . . . (6 schools)
Languages.....(2 schools)

Explanations: The daily practice helps in learning skills.

Taught more effectively on full year plan

"Reflective" subjects Lit.12, Hi.12) . . . (2 schools)
Languages .....(1 school)
Music .....(1 school)

Explanations: A) The reflective subjects need time for outside reading and thought.
B) Music and language suffer from the possible break made by skipping a semester.

18. a) Are there any specific local problems solved by semestering? (Specify)

The comments in this section were not specifically local, but were system wide.

- Can offer more alternative programs.
- There can be faster graduation and earlier employment.
- Can repeat a course in the same year.
- Can increase the number and continuity of vocational courses.
- The student can "see" the end of the course.
- Space problems are relieved and available space is more effectively used.
- Students have greater opportunity to diversify their program, and catch up on missed courses.

Nine schools did not answer this question.

18. b) Are there any specific local problems generated by semestering? (Specify)

- Regular school attendance becomes very important.

- Time for project work becomes reduced.
- Continuity becomes a problem in areas such as band, typing and oral language.
- There is more bookkeeping.
- Double start-up is onerous.
- There is an extra workload for staff and administration.

Nine schools did not answer this question.

19. For each plan, how many different students does the typical teacher meet during the school year?

*Typically a teacher meets more students in a year in the semester plan.

On semester plan. . . .

220 pupils/teacher/year	1 school
240 pupils/teacher/year	6 schools
260 pupils/teacher/year	1 school
no answer	10 schools

On full-year timetable . . . .

200 to 210 students /teacher / year	8 schools
170 to 190 students / teacher / year	5 schools
less than 170 students / teacher / year	1 school
no answer	4 schools

20. What is the typical reaction of students to semestering?

The students like semestering	9 schools
The students don't like semestering . . .	0 schools
no answer or don't know	9 schools

21. What effect (if any) has semestering on continuity of instruction?

No effect or very little effect . . .	3 schools
It depends on course organization . . .	3 schools
Greater day-to-day continuity but less year-to-year continuity	1 school
Has a beneficial effect on continuity for most courses.	1 school
No answer	10 schools

22. What effect (if any) has semestering on curriculum enrichment?

Enriches the curriculum by allowing the students to take more courses over two semesters . . . 4 schools
Decreased enrichment within a course . . . 2 schools
Increases enrichment within a course by spreading the course over two semesters . . . . . 1 school

No answer . . . . . 11 schools

23. In which subject areas has semestering increased the demand for courses?

All electives or most electives . . . . . 3 schools
plus
I.E. and H.E. . . . . 3 schools
Art and Fine Arts . . . . . 3 schools
Languages . . . . . .2 schools

Other courses mentioned (Music, band, Anthropology, computer science, humanities, wilderness education)

No answer . . . . . 10 schools

24. In which subject areas has semestering reduced the demand for courses?

No decrease in demand for any courses . . . . 4 schools
Double semestered courses in Grade 12 (Bio. 12, Chem. 12, Phy. 12, Ma. 12) . . . . . 2 schools

No answer . . . . . 10 schools

25. Which of the two timetable arrangements is better suited to the "extended day" arrangement? (Explain).

The semester system if there is no rotation of the timetable . . . . . 7 schools
No difference unless the school is on a non-rotating day . . . . . 1 school

No answer . . . . . 10 schools

26. On which timetable scheme does your school operate? (check one.)

A- 4 schools . . . Full year for all courses
B- 2 schools . . . Semesters for almost all courses
C- 11 schools . . Semesters for some courses, full-year for others
D- 1 school . . . Same as C, except some courses are offered on both plans simultaneously.

"If "D", please list the courses given on both plans simultaneously.

(The one school that responded did not list the courses)

27. Please indicate what you consider to be the relative merits of the various plans.

Merits of semestering

- provides more flexibility in organization and, as a result, can cater to more individual needs. . . . (7 schools)
- the student can take more courses . . . (2 schools)
- enables students to catch-up, or accelerate, or repeat failed courses in the same year.. . (5 schools)
- the student can concentrate on a few subjects at a time. . . . (2 schools)
- have a fresh start every 5 months . . . (3 schools)
- daily instruction is more efficient (less forgetting) . . . (3 schools)
- better use of space . . . (2 schools)
- flexibility in staff deployment . . . (1 school)
- meet fewer students at one time . . . (1 school)
- fixed timetable better for a community school. . . . (1 school)

Merits of full-year

- more time per course, and less rushed . . (2 schools)
- provides more time for subjects which require outside reading (S.S., Hist., Lit., etc.)
- no long breaks between courses . . .(2 schools)
- class size smaller . . .(1 school)

The following category was not specifically asked for in this question. (#28)

Disadvantages of semestering

- an extended absence by a student would probably have a drastic effect on his academic performance. (3 schools)
- most courses must be revised to fit the system(2 schools) (see also questions #6 and #7)
- more work for the administrative staff (2 schools). (see also questions #12 and 13)

No answer to question 28 . . . . . .7 schools

28. Please feel free to make additional comments.

- Cramming too much in too little time, or not affording enough time for certain subjects, are the result of poor planning and are not inherent in the system.
- It is not necessary to reduce the total number of hours for a course (in the semester system)
- It is important that there are alternative ten-month programs in the same geographical area.

Date _____, 19__. _____ _____
School Principal

Please return to Evaluation and Research, Education Services Group, by November 29, 1974.

APPENDIX B: List of Assistant Superintendents and Coordinators who Responded to the Questionnaire.

Assistant Superintendants.

Mr. W.G. Blake
Mr. C.T. Etchell
Mr. A.B. Wright

Coordinators.

Mr. J.J. Appleby	- Coordinator of Physical Education and Athletics
Mrs. M. Ginther	- Coordinator of Library Services
Miss M.L. Grant	- Coordinator of Counselling
Mr. R. Smith	- Coordinator of Pre-employment programs
Mr. D. Tupman	- Coordinator of Music
Mr. R. Ralston	- Coordinator of Industrial Education

NOTE: These submissions may be made available on request.

Recommendations:

It is recommended:

1) That the semester plan be continued because it is one way of facilitating the provision of alternatives in the school system (e.g., mini-courses, locally-developed courses, early graduation, etc.) and makes possible a broader range of course offerings,

2) That curriculum development and course modification be encouraged so as to provide courses which are tailored for the semester system. (It is important that adequate time be provided for core courses and for English in particular.)

3) That a committee give careful consideration to the content of selected courses and to the merits of semestering them, with a view to suggesting ones that might best be offered as double-semester courses (e.g. En.12, En.8, En.9, Ma.8, Ma.9, Hi.12, etc.).

4) That there be a commitment to continue to monitor the semester systems being implemented in Vancouver schools and to re-examine systematically their impact on student achievement at the Grade 10 and Grade 12 levels.

April 7, 1975

Committee members:

Bill Blake
Walter Moult
Norm Ellis
Bob Muir
Norman Gleadow